

REMARKS

Claims 1-29 and 31-33 have been examined. By this Amendment, Applicants are amending claim 1 to include the allowable subject matter of claim 9, and canceling claims 9 and 20.

Allowable Subject Matter

Claim 31 is allowed since it was rewritten in independent form (see the last Office action). Claims 9, 14, and 19 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Applicants thank the Examiner for indicating that claims 9, 14, and 19 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Therefore, Applicants hereby amend claim 1 to include the subject matter of claim 9, which places amended claim 1 in condition for immediate allowance. Applicants note to the Examiner that the subject matter of claim 9 has been amended to improve clarity. Claims 2-29, 32, and 33 are immediately allowable at least by virtue of their dependency from amended claim 1.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

Claims 1-8, 20-26, 28, and 32-33 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being allegedly anticipated by Libori et al. (U.S. 2002/0061176; hereinafter "Libori").

Claims 1-4, 8, 10-13, and 15-18 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being allegedly anticipated by Saitoh et al. (hereinafter "Saitoh"). Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections.

As noted above, claim 1 has been amended to include the allowable subject material of claim 9. Therefore, the rejection of claim 1 and its dependent claims have been rendered moot. Withdrawal of the rejection is hereby respectfully requested.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

Claims 27 and 29 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Libori. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

As noted above, claim 1 has been amended to include the allowable subject material of claim 9. Therefore, the rejection of claim 1 and its dependent claims have been rendered moot. Withdrawal of the rejection is hereby respectfully requested.

Conclusion

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,

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